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Tuesday, 18 April 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wang Guangya	(China)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Mr. Faaborg-Andersen
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Mr. Christian
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Kitaoka
	Peru	Mr. De Rivero
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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06-31294 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort His Excellency Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to a seat at the Council table.

Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzic.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria), took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Schwarz-Schilling: This is the first time I have had the honour of addressing the Security Council as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I am particularly pleased to be here alongside the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzic. That reflects my role in Bosnia and Herzegovina today — a partner alongside the Bosnian authorities.

I am addressing the Council today at a crucial time in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The phase of post-war reconstruction is coming to an end. It is my job to complete it and to facilitate progress towards Euro-Atlantic structures. This phase will see the country progress from a framework set in Dayton towards a structure established and owned in Sarajevo, ready for closer integration with Brussels.

One of my key tasks in this process is to oversee the end of the Office of the High Representative (OHR) and the full establishment of the Office of the European Union Special Representative. The end of the OHR will also mean the end of the special executive powers — the so-called Bonn powers. I look forward to the support of the Security Council in completing a successful transition. I hope that this can occur in the first or second quarter of 2007, although it will depend on a number of factors.

However, in order to achieve a successful transition, an important principle is at stake: ownership. That goes to the heart of my mandate. The principle of ownership refers to the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to assume its full responsibilities as a normal European democratic State, but the principle of ownership also refers to the approach of the international community. Our approach must change in order to allow a democratic political culture to develop that will be sustainable in the long term. There can be no sustainability without ownership.

I would like to ask for the Security Council's support in the new approach. That is easier said than done. Indeed, there will be temptations for the international community to act and intervene in order

to ensure short-term gains. Those are likely to increase, rather than decrease, as we move towards the completion of the present phase, but it is at that very stage that such reactions and interventions can no longer be compatible with the long-term development of an independent and sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We have talked about ownership for some time. Now we must be ready to uphold that principle in our actions as well as in our words. That may mean that we have to stand back and allow the Bosnian authorities to take decisions, when previously we would have acted and directed the process.

I see three priorities in 2006 for Bosnia and Herzegovina: first, constitutional reform; secondly, the general elections in October; and thirdly, the ongoing stability and association agreement negotiations with the European Union.

I shall start with constitutional reform. After months of negotiations, the Bosnian political leaders reached an agreement on a package of measures to reform the Constitution. It is now up to Parliament to take the responsible decision to adopt the package in the coming week. The agreement is an important step towards making Bosnia and Herzegovina a more functional State, but it is only a first step. Constitutional reform is a process and not an event. Discussions on further constitutional reform will commence after the October elections.

Bosnia and Herzegovina faces a historic opportunity in the next few days. The decision by Bosnian parliamentarians to pass the package will send an important signal to the international community, and specifically to Europe, about the country's readiness to reform itself on the path to Europe and to serve its citizens better. It is important that everyone understand what is at stake. A "no" to constitutional reform would send an entirely different signal to Europe and the rest of the world.

In the general elections in October, the Bosnian people will for the first time vote for leaders who will have full responsibility for governing their own country. There will in future be no safety net from the international community to step in when there are problems. That is how democracy gives ownership to the voters of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Bosnian authorities have made a very clear, positive start to negotiate a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union (EU). That sends a positive signal to Europe about Bosnia and Herzegovina's professionalism and capacity to negotiate with its future partners.

There are now two important topics on which I intend to engage with renewed focus, namely, the economy and education. Serious progress is required in both areas if Bosnia and Herzegovina is to offer a better and more prosperous future for its citizens.

Economic development is a prerequisite for a stable democratic process and for the sustainable future of the country. I will therefore make support for the economy a personal priority of my term in office. I see great economic potential in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is annual economic growth of over 5 per cent and scope for significant development in key industries. But trade and investment are vital to allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to stand on its own two feet economically. Moreover, we have a responsibility to create favourable conditions for the economy to prosper. We cannot encourage economic development on the one hand while imposing restrictive visa regimes on the other. I am therefore lobbying European Union member States on the question of visa facilitation for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Every healthy economy needs high standards of education. There lies a key to a brighter future for Bosnia and Herzegovina and to reconciliation for future generations. The young people of the country, who represent the future, deserve a better education. In order to be competitive alongside their future European partners, they will need a better education. The lasting division of the Bosnian education system along ethnic lines has to end. The lack of responsible ownership in the relevant domestic structures must change. The Bosnian authorities and institutions have a major opportunity to serve their citizens and to fulfil international obligations in the field of education. There will be great potential benefits across all aspects of the country's development if progress is made on this issue.

It is also our duty to resolve three outstanding issues from the post-war period.

First, I regret that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have not yet resolved the issue of full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal

for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), to ensure that the remaining fugitives, chiefly Mladic and Karadzic, are delivered to The Hague. Bosnia and Herzegovina's advancement towards the Partnership for Peace and NATO structures requires concrete results. We saw good progress in 2005, but we have not yet seen the same kind of progress in 2006. That is not acceptable. The international community must take a firm stance. Until the remaining ICTY issues have been resolved, Bosnia and Herzegovina and others in the region will not be able to take the final steps towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

Secondly, I have already taken steps this month to resolve the status of officials removed from public positions by the High Representative. Removals played an important role in Bosnia's post-war recovery, but there are compelling reasons why those bans should now be lifted before the Office of the High Representative closes. That will not apply to those removed for non-cooperation with the ICTY, which is an obligation that Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet met in full. I have developed a parallel system to lift all bans gradually, as well as to conduct reviews on an individual basis. Such measures show the seriousness of my commitment to transfer responsibilities to the Bosnian authorities.

Thirdly, there remains one final issue whose resolution needs the Council's support. That concerns a legal anomaly that dates back to the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) mission. I personally want to see this issue resolved before the end of the mandate of the Office of the High Representative. This concerns police officers who were decertified by the IPTF without the possibility of review or appeal. The EU Police Mission, the successor to the IPTF, did not assume certification responsibilities. That situation cannot be redressed without the support of the United Nations.

I share and fully support the approach of the Bosnian Government on that issue, and I have received the full backing of the European Union to pursue a solution. I believe the situation can be resolved constructively to the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to the credit of the Security Council. The Office of the High Representative and the EU stand ready to work with the United Nations to establish a review body that can address this issue in a proper manner. I am willing to send an expert to New York to work with the United Nations, alongside representatives of the European Union presidency and the Council's secretariat, to facilitate setting up such a body. It is time to resolve this issue. We should not preach the principle of the rule of law and responsibility for reforms and ownership while at the same time contradicting that principle in our own activities. I urge the Council to address this issue so that it can be resolved once and for all.

I speak to the Council today as Bosnia and Herzegovina stands at the threshold of a promising future. Bosnia and Herzegovina has the opportunity to be a fully independent, sovereign State. The country must take on responsibility for its own political reforms and economic development.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is now in a position to signal to Europe and to the world that the country is ready to become a full partner in Euro-Atlantic structures. But we should be aware that the present phase is probably the most challenging for both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international community, with, on the one hand, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina learning to take full responsibility for their own progress and development and, on the other hand, the international community learning to resist intervention when key decisions are being taken by the Bosnian authorities. The international community has set out clearly the principles of democracy and the rule of law, and put in place the foundations of a functioning State. It is now time to hand over the reins to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their elected representatives.

I look forward to assisting, advocating on behalf of, and advising the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but no longer doing their job for them. They must now seize the opportunities before them to shape their own future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Schwarz-Schilling for his briefing.

I now invite Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to make a statement.

Mr. Terzic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) (*spoke in Bosnian; English text provided by the delegation*): Two years since my last visit, I have the special pleasure of once again addressing the Security Council, together with the new — but I am certain, the last — High

Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling.

I believe that the very fact that continuity now lies with the Prime Minister and not the High Representative sends a good signal regarding the stability and the relationships achieved within Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As the Council knows, during the last three and a half years Bosnia and Herzegovina has passed from a country focused on implementing a peace agreement to one that is today negotiating with the European Commission with a view to signing the Stabilization and Accession Agreement. We managed to do this by surviving very forceful reform for the purpose of strengthening the State's capacity. At the same time, together with all the needed reforms, for the last two years, we have marked continuous growth in direct foreign investment. Our stable currency, low inflation, increased exports, growth in the gross domestic product — which was 6 per cent in 2004, and the same level is expected in 2005 — all of these elements clearly demonstrate that Bosnia and Herzegovina is on the right path.

Because of this, I want to stress that we support the High Representative in the directions and policy he set forth for the fullest transfer of ownership to Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions. Our clear goal is the achievement of full integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Euro-Atlantic and European communities.

I am confident that the Council will agree with my remark that Bosnia and Herzegovina's experience makes it a successful example of peacebuilding in which the international community also played a significant role. Ten years after the conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina can be a relevant example for the United Nations for other post-conflict areas and a model of principles for resolving such situations.

The key reason behind this success is that the international community's single voice was joined by the local leadership on the reforms and changes needed to create a society with better opportunities for all. This attitude and policy can stabilize the most complex situations. We know this from our own experience. It is exactly this experience that gives us the right to ask for the support of the Member States of the United Nations for our membership in the newly established United Nations body, the Peacebuilding Commission.

I want to especially emphasize that the main reason for my address to this body is a problem that was not fully resolved in the right manner. It relates to the process of police reform that was conducted by the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There should be no doubt whatsoever that the International Police Task Force (IPTF), as well as the overall United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), has made an unprecedented contribution to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords and, even more, laid a foundation for the modern reformed police structures in my country. Therefore, I want once again to express our gratitude for that extraordinary work and participation in securing prosperity in so many areas of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As I am sure the Council knows, the IPTF, which was under the umbrella of the UNMIBH, was in charge, among other things, of the certification process for the police forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this process, decisions were made to decertify 598 former policemen. A direct consequence was that all of those persons were prohibited from working in law enforcement agencies for the rest of their lives. The main problem now lies in the fact that during the mandate of the IPTF those individuals had no opportunity to see any documentation, nor were they given any reason for their decertification. Moreover, for 150 people, the established complaint procedure was withheld because the decision to decertify them was taken on the last day of the IPTF mandate.

During my last visit to New York, in November 2005, I presented this problem to the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Jean-Marie Guehenno, and the Secretary-General's then Chef de Cabinet, Mr. Mark Malloch Brown. In the meantime, pressure has been increasing, not only from the decertified policemen, but also from the general public in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because of their conviction that the situation presents a clear violation of basic human rights. This dissatisfaction is compounded by the fact these policemen had been screened by the United Nations, an organization dedicated to protecting and promoting human rights all over the world.

Based on the Security Council presidential statement of 25 June 2004 (S/PRST/2004/22), the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that the Security Council is the only relevant

place in which we could find a mutually satisfactory solution. With this in mind, the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations sent an official letter (S/2006/64) in which he requests, on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, consideration of possible options for securing rights of appeal and review of decertification decisions that were previously found to be appropriate.

I am taking this opportunity to address the Council to reiterate our request to look into this problem as soon as possible and take a decision that would uphold the fundamental values of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): As there is no list of speakers for this meeting, I invite Council members who wish to take the floor to so indicate to the Secretariat.

Mr. Johnston (United Kingdom): I would like to welcome and thank the High Representative at this, his first meeting with Council members. The United Kingdom wishes him well in his new role of what he has rightly called a crucial stage in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we will support him fully in his work. We would also like to welcome back to the Council Prime Minister Terzic and thank him for his intervention.

The United Kingdom fully associates itself with the European Union statement to be delivered later by the representative of Austria. I would like to briefly make five points on priorities ahead for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

First, the United Kingdom welcomes the recent agreement on constitutional reform. As the High Representative himself said, this is an important first step down the road to a more functional State, leaving behind arrangements and structures that are no longer necessary and enabling Bosnia and Herzegovina to start looking forward. We therefore urge the Bosnian parliament to ratify the amendments quickly.

Secondly, we agree that the time has come for the Bosnian authorities to be more responsible and accountable for governing their own country. But also it is important that any review of the Bonn powers must reflect conditions on the ground, especially with regard to the continuing priority we must give to securing full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). As the High Representative said, the international community must take a firm stance on the need for this.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom urges Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the other changes and reforms necessary to meet the requirements set out by the European Union in November 2005, when it was agreed to open negotiations for a stabilization and association agreement. The European Union made a clear commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is now up to the Bosnians to demonstrate their commitments to European integration.

Fourthly, the United Kingdom is concerned about progress towards a restructured Bosnian police force. Agreement has been reached in principle and a directorate has been established, but this has yet to produce any real recommendations or results. It is an important issue and work must not be left until just before the September deadline.

Finally, on the issue of decertified police officers, the United Kingdom also wants to find a way forward. It is important that we explore all options in consultations with the relevant parties, and we look forward to hearing about the planned expert-level discussion between the Office of the High Representative, the European Union and the United Nations.

In conclusion, the Bosnian Government will need determination and commitment to meet the challenges of further reform and development. It will also need the help of the High Representative and of the international community in all its guises. We will continue to play a full role in this work to help build a stable and sustainable European future for Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the region as a whole.

Mr. Vassilakis (Greece): We welcome the new High Representative, Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, and thank him for his presentation on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for his outline of the approach he intends to take. We also extend a warm welcome to Mr. Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his comprehensive and clear statement.

Greece fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union.

Since the last time the Council had the opportunity to discuss the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a number of developments have occurred that could rightly be considered crucial for the country; they more or less frame and determine the future course of events. I am referring, of course, to the launching of negotiations last November on a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union and to the 18 March 2006 agreement on constitutional reform.

The High Representative was right to highlight the fact that we are now in a new and critical phase. The new approach that he intends to follow is well suited to the new times and the new circumstances. The overall goal remains to help Bosnia and Herzegovina develop a stable democratic system and a sustainable and dynamic economy on its way towards integration into the Euro-Atlantic family. Ownership of the process by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the sustained assistance and support of the international community, is the key to success.

The year 2006 will see the completion of the next phase of Bosnia's transition. We hope that the necessary legislative action will be taken to implement the constitutional amendments in time for the October elections and that the constitutional process will continue until all outstanding issues are resolved. In the coming days and weeks, Bosnian parliamentarians will have to show leadership and vision and assume the responsibility of taking the constitutional process forward by approving the package of measures to reform the constitution.

The next milestone in the country's history will be the holding of elections next October. For the first time, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be voting to elect leaders that will be called upon to take full responsibility for governing. The upcoming elections will, it is to be hoped, signal the beginning of a new Bosnian State that is functional and increasingly self-sustaining.

We fully agree with the High Representative that if Bosnia and Herzegovina is to offer a better future to its people, it needs prosperity and education. We therefore welcome his intention to place those two areas at the core of his work. For our part, we will continue to support and contribute to the economic recovery of the country, both through the European Union and from a regional perspective. Furthermore, we share the belief that if Bosnia and Herzegovina is to embrace its new future, it has to have the courage to overcome the past by teaching a new generation to embrace a shared identity and turn away from past hatred and prejudice. Division of the educational system along ethnic lines cannot and does not belong in the new Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Of course, there remains a significant legacy from the past, and Bosnia and Herzegovina must continue to struggle to overcome it by dealing with it decisively and effectively. More specifically, a clean break with the past requires, above all, the completion of the chapter of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). That can be achieved only by transferring to The Hague the remaining fugitives, particularly Karadzic and Mladic. Nothing less than that can guarantee the advancement of Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership in the Partnership for Peace. The international community will continue to stand firm on this issue and expects that the progress in cooperation with the ICTY witnessed during 2005 will continue this year.

We welcome the High Representative's recent decision to resolve the issue of the status of officials removed from public positions. That is a solution that takes account of more recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that takes a flexible and pragmatic approach to resolving that outstanding issue.

With regard to the other outstanding issue, decertified police officers, we believe that a solution must be found. Such a solution should be constructive and to the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that context, we stand ready to support any real and pragmatic solution that will resolve the issue once and for all. We welcome the High Representative's commitment to address this problem expeditiously, and we hope that he will be able to contribute substantially to its solution.

Finally, notwithstanding the impressive progress achieved so far, the new High Representative has his work cut out for him. His is the last mile, but it will not be an easy one to cover. In that regard, we pledge to him our full support and wish him the best of luck.

Mr. De La Sablière (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to welcome once again Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Special Representative of the European Union, and to thank him for his briefing.

which we followed with great interest. I should also like to warmly welcome the presence today of Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I support the statement to be made shortly by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. For my part, I should like to make a few comments.

First, I reaffirm France's full support for Mr. Schwarz-Schilling's efforts, his priorities and the objectives he has set through his work programme. This is an important year for Bosnia and Herzegovina, marked by the general elections to be held in October, the negotiation of a stabilization and association agreement with the European Union and institutional reform. The priorities of the High Representative are ours as well. In that regard, we are pleased that he is making the improvement of Bosnia and Herzegovina's economic prospects one of his priorities. Indeed, the country's economic recovery is a prerequisite for development and for improvements in the lives of Bosnian citizens.

Secondly, I wish to emphasize our support for Mr. Schwarz-Schilling's role as coordinator of the international community's activities. That is essential to maintain a consistent and harmonious approach. With regard to the gradual phasing out of the mandate of the High Representative and its replacement by that of the Special Representative of the European Union, we look forward with great interest to the proposals he will be making in June.

Concerning the strengthening of the ties between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union, we are pleased that the negotiations to conclude a stabilization and association agreement are taking place in good conditions, the Bosnian authorities prepared well for them. We encourage them to continue that progress so that the pace of the negotiations does not slow. In that regard, I wish to recall the importance of full cooperation on the part of the States in the region with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

From that perspective, the completion of the ongoing reforms is also essential; the general elections to be held in October must not lead to a slowing of their implementation. We welcome the agreement reached among Bosnia and Herzegovina's seven main political parties on initial constitutional reforms; this is a step in the right direction because it will help to strengthen the central Government and promote better governance. We welcome the role played by the United States in that outcome.

Thus, it is now essential that the constitutional amendments — which have been agreed upon in principle — be adopted on schedule so that they can be implemented before the October elections. We also encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue with police reform and reform of the media and public administration.

In the area of the police, we deem it important to resolve the dispute concerning the decertification of Bosnian police officers. Here we are prepared to support any solution on which Mr. Schwarz-Schilling could agree with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

I should like in conclusion to extend my best wishes to Mr. Schwarz-Schilling and to Mr. Terzić in their efforts to advance the reform process. We have provided Bosnia and Herzegovina military, financial and humanitarian support over the past 10 years, and we will continue to stand side by side with that country in the years to come.

Mr. Burian (Slovakia): At the outset, I would like to join my colleagues in thanking Mr. Schwarz-Schilling for his briefing and valuable observations concerning current developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also wish to extend our welcome to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzić.

Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement that will be delivered shortly by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. I will therefore limit my statement to the following few points.

We would like to commend the remarkable progress that Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved in its transformation process, overcoming a very difficult legacy of war and inter-ethnic conflict. We believe that European integration has been and remains one of the decisive factors in the context of stabilization and peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the western Balkans as a whole. That is why we support the continuation of the integration processes, so as to ensure the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of

other countries of the western Balkans in the European Union (EU).

At the same time, we understand that Bosnia and Herzegovina must overcome many challenges and avoid many pitfalls on its way towards integration into the EU and lasting stability.

First of all, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs stronger State institutions, including judiciary and law enforcement structures compatible with European standards. The current system of government is unsustainable and requires sweeping constitutional reforms. In that context, we welcome the progress achieved so far in the ongoing talks on constitutional reform.

We encourage political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue their efforts to overcome the remaining disagreements. The political parties must put aside their narrow political and ethnic interests so as to reach agreement on the reform package currently under discussion in Bosnia and Herzegovina's parliament and adopt it expeditiously.

Secondly, we agree with Mr. Schwarz-Schilling that it is high time to change the form of the international community's engagement in the country. Bosnia and Herzegovina and its democratically elected leaders and institutions must gradually assume full ownership and responsibility for the transformation processes, with, of course, the continued support and assistance of the international community, especially the EU.

In that context, we welcome the very constructive stance of the High Representative and EU Special Representative Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, who is ready and willing to take on more of an advisory role rather than use his executive Bonn powers.

Thirdly, we also agree that special attention should be paid to security sector reform, including police reform, aimed at creating a single professional police force recruited on the basis of technical, not political, criteria. We welcome the continuing progress in this direction and, in that regard, we commend the role of the European Union Police Mission in the police reform.

In that context, we also wish to point out the need to resolve the problem of those police officers who were decertified by a United Nations Police Task Force decision. We believe that all decertified police officers should be guaranteed due process, including the right to appeal. We believe that urgent, direct United Nations action in that regard is required to solve this problem as soon as possible, bearing in mind the political sensitivity of the issue and the credibility of the new State institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that connection, we would like to ask Mr. Schwarz-Schilling to elaborate a little bit more on possible ways of addressing this problem and on the possible implications of this issue for the police reform and the transformation processes, including the forthcoming elections.

Last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation at the progress made in the framework of the cooperation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). We would like to encourage all parties, institutions and leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to help and contribute to bringing the remaining perpetrators to justice, thus closing this very sad chapter in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This step is, in our opinion, very important for final reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for the country's integration in the EU.

In conclusion, I should like to assure you, Mr. President, that Slovakia is ready to continue its active support and assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in its transformation and integration and to share the experience of our own successful transformation.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): We, too, would like to thank High Representative Schwarz-Schilling for his briefing here today and to welcome Prime Minister Terzić as well.

The United States appreciates the High Representative's support for constitutional reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Modernizing the Dayton constitution is essential for creating a government that can meet the needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens and for that country to meet the criteria for integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions such as the European Union (EU) and NATO's Partnership for Peace.

The United States strongly supports the package of constitutional reforms negotiated by Bosnia and Herzegovina political parties, currently under consideration by the parliament. We call on the

parliament to enact those changes so that they can take effect in time for the October elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

These are only first steps in what will be a longer-term process, and the United States Government is committed to helping the country continue with these reforms. We welcome High Representative Schwarz-Schilling's efforts to transfer greater responsibilities and authority to Bosnian Government institutions with an eye towards transitioning his Office — the Office of the High Representative — to an EU Special Representative Office in 2007. We urge that Office to accelerate transfer of authorities to Bosnians in advance of the October elections, as circumstances permit.

While allowing Bosnians to take ownership, we also urge the Office of the High Representative to continue to take the steps necessary to advance reform and complete civilian implementation of the Dayton Accords, including clarifications and corrections to previous decisions taken by the Office.

We understand the High Representative and Prime Minister's interest in resolving issues related to United Nations decertified police officers. We are committed to working with other Security Council members to address and resolve this issue.

Mr. Faaborg-Andersen (Denmark): I should like to join others in welcoming the High Representative, Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzić, to the Council. I thank both of them for their interesting statements, which have given us impressive and detailed accounts of the notable advances that have been achieved on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I should like to associate myself with the statement to be delivered later by the Permanent Representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union (EU).

I will limit myself to three points.

First, we have been particularly encouraged by the recent political agreement on constitutional reform. The reform is a significant step towards improving the efficiency of Bosnia and Herzegovina's State institutions. As such, it will also have an important impact on Bosnia and Herzegovina's desired path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We therefore urge Bosnia and Herzegovina's parliament to adopt the proposed amendments in time for the October 2006 general elections. Closer relationships with the EU and NATO will require further reform by our partners in Sarajevo.

We welcome the progress made in the negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU. We encourage the relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue along this path in order to cement a formal and comprehensive relationship between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The pace will depend on the implementation of the police reform, the adoption and implementation of legislation on public broadcasting and full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Bosnia and Herzegovina — indeed, all countries in the western Balkans — needs to take decisive action and bring remaining persons indicted for war crimes to justice, most notably Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadzić. Only then will the remaining legacy of the war in the western Balkans be buried — a precondition for lasting reconciliation in the region.

Secondly, we support the intention of the High Representative to restrict the use of the Bonn powers to the extent possible, thus allowing the local authorities the greatest degree of ownership. We appreciate that there is a fine balance between, on the one hand, using the Bonn powers proactively and, on the other hand, ensuring an appropriate gradual transfer of responsibility and political ownership to the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We support the gradual downsizing of the Office of the High Representative, but the job is not yet finished, and we need to ensure that that is done in a measured way and with due attention to the challenges still ahead in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, with regard to the issue of police certification, we support the ongoing dialogue between the High Representative and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. At this stage it is important not to exclude any of the options before us. We agree that the issue needs to be resolved as soon as possible.

Denmark remains committed to assisting as best it can as Bosnia and Herzegovina and, indeed, the whole western Balkans region continue their journey towards stability and democracy. In this regard, we give our full support to the High Representative,

Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, and the approach that he has outlined.

I think that we all sense the strong commitment of the Government and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take charge in forming a better, more prosperous and democratic future together. We welcome and strongly support that.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like at the outset to welcome Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, who has served as High Representative and European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1 February 2006. We would like to assure him of my delegation's full support as he carries out his important functions. We also welcome the presence at this meeting of Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for the information that he provided.

On 21 November 2005, the Council renewed the mandate of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and expressed support for the European Union's decision to initiate negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on a stabilization and association agreement.

We are pleased to note that, having initiated technical talks in January of this year, Bosnia and Herzegovina is now on its way towards Euro-Atlantic integration and that it has met the conditions to advance towards the stage of an autonomous national State that is actively integrated into Europe.

We take note of, inter alia, the renewed discussions on constitutional reform and the commitment reached by the eight strongest political parties to support the process and to agree on constitutional changes; the agreement that was reached on how to proceed with the police restructuring; the conclusion of the defence-sector reform process; and the continuation of the effective unification of the administration of the city of Mostar. Those actions show that the national authorities are taking responsibility for moving forward with the process. That is a positive step, which should be underscored, as should the fact that elections will be held in October.

However, those achievements should not prevent us from acknowledging that there are a number of issues still outstanding. We believe that the progress achieved in certain areas, including in the economic sphere, must also be made in the fight against impunity. Although further cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has been noted, the failure to arrest two of the most infamous figures accused of genocide and crimes against humanity — Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic — not only impedes Bosnia and Herzegovina's joining the NATO Partnership for Peace but also delays the process of healing the wounds of the past.

As we have stated on previous occasions, Argentina urges unconditional compliance with the Dayton Agreements and the effective implementation of its commitments, in particular, cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. We believe that only through joint efforts to combat impunity in cases of serious human rights violations will the development of judicial institutions be fostered, thus helping to strengthen justice and the rule of law. We urge the parties to do their best in this regard so as to allow for reconciliation, which is a prerequisite for laying the foundations of a truly sustainable society in an economically sovereign State.

Mr. De Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to join in the expressions of gratitude to the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreements in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, for his detailed briefing on the situation in that country. Peru congratulates him on his appointment and wishes him every success in his mission.

I would also like to welcome the presence with us this morning of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzic.

Recent events in Bosnia and Herzegovina show that that country is continuing to build on the important progress achieved since the signing of the Peace Agreements. The progressive transfer of the powers of the Office of the High Representative to the sovereign democratic institutions of the country is a clear sign of the progress achieved, including towards the building of a State based on the rule of law.

However, many challenges lie ahead. As we note from the report (S/2006/75), 40 items have yet to be completed, although in most cases their finalization is projected for this year. The international community — particularly the European Union, through the major

role being played in this new phase by its Special Representative — must therefore do the best it can, as it has done to date, to complete the outstanding tasks and to consolidate the transition in a framework of stability and peace.

We are optimistic about the efforts that the main political forces of the country have been making with a view to implementing constitutional reform. Likewise, the agreement to move forward with police restructuring is positive for the process in general.

One aspect that Peru considers critical for the stability of the entire region is the consolidation of the judicial institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We must recall that a central task in the conclusion strategy of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is the transfer of certain defendants to the competent national jurisdictions. The Tribunal recently confirmed the transfer of four new defendants to Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it is necessary to continue strengthening the judicial institutional capacity of that country so that it may duly prosecute the defendants. In that context, we note with satisfaction the convening, in Brussels in March, of a second conference of donors to finance the needs of the judicial institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, the full cooperation of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia has yet to be achieved. We note a significant improvement in the level of cooperation in the period covered by the last report of the Special Representative, and we welcome the fact that only four fugitives remain at large of the 18 who are linked to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We note with concern, however, that it is those suspected of the most serious violations of international humanitarian law — Mr. Karadzic and Mr. Mladic — who remain at large. That situation should be remedied as soon as possible.

Finally, my delegation agrees with the High Representative and the Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina that economic development is a crucial variable in the national reconciliation of that country. Without an economy capable of creating conditions for sustainable growth, the necessary stability will not be established to entrench the political reforms and to build solid democratic institutions. We therefore note with satisfaction that the gross national product of that country grew by 6 per cent in 2004 and by 5.7 per cent in 2005. We expect such growth to provide benefits to the population and, above all, to serve to further reduce the high unemployment rate there. We are optimistic that this will be so and that the culmination this year of the outstanding economic reforms will represent a further advance towards the final objective.

Mr. Scherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is pleased to welcome to this Chamber the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzic, and to thank him for enunciating the position of the Bosnian Government.

We thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the current stage of the implementation of the peace agreement. The Russian delegation commends the efforts of the High Representative to promote the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to pursue reforms to enhance the effectiveness of the country's central institutions. We continue to believe that the further specification and promotion of those very sensitive reforms should take fully into account the interests of all Bosnian parties.

In the time to come, the key problems for the country's future will have to be resolved, including the fate of the Constitution, an important element of the Dayton accords. We agree with the point made by the High Representative regarding the link between progress on constitutional reform and the outcome of the forthcoming general parliamentary elections.

With regard to the foundations of the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we believe that the very philosophy of the Dayton accords present very significant challenges, in particular with respect to strengthening the climate of trust and the constructive cooperation of the international community with the country, and the importance of achieving consensus among all Bosnian parties on building a stable State there. We believe that the international community still needs to focus its attention on such issues as the guarantee of genuine equality among people throughout the entire country, the problem of local institutions, and refugees and displaced persons.

We are pleased to note that progress has been made towards strengthening the Bosnian institutions. We support the speedy transfer to the Bosnian parties of responsibility for the fate of the country and further progress in political and economic reform. On that

issue, we believe it crucial that the High Representative continue to work in a spirit of partnership with the Bosnian parties on the basis of the adoption of independent consensus decisions and the resumption of constructive dialogue. We feel that the use of diplomatic mechanisms should be maximized in our work with the Bosnian parties, inter alia, in the field of cooperation with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

Like the High Representative, we are concerned by attempts to call into question the results of the certification of the police carried out by the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that context, we are prepared to engage in a constructive review of the proposals on possible options for resolving the so-called problem of non-certified police officers, which, of course, must be based on the appropriate decisions of the Security Council and remain squarely within the framework of international law and, primarily, of the United Nations Charter. In that regard, we believe that the Security Council should send a clear signal regarding the inadmissibility of any attempt to deny the results registered by the international presences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend the intention of the High Representative closely to cooperate with the United Nations in the interests of a speedy solution to the problem.

In conclusion, we would stress that Russia intends to continue to play an active and constructive role in international assistance towards the Bosnian settlement within the context of the mechanisms created to that end, in particular the Peace Implementation Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Steering Committee, the Contact Group, and in close coordination with the High Representative.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): We, too, thank the High Representative, Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, for his briefing on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We welcome and thank the Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzic, for his latest report to the Council.

My delegation is encouraged by the breakthrough that was achieved late last year when an agreement was reached to create a unified, multi-ethnic national police force to replace the separate forces operated by the various entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Along with the defence reforms and the broadcasting legislation, the restructuring of the police force was one of the prerequisites to the stabilization and association agreement negotiations with the European Union. On the decertified police officers, we urge expeditious consultations to be held by the various parties concerned in order to find a solution to that outstanding issue.

We note with satisfaction that the European Union's foreign ministers have given their approval for talks on the stabilization and association agreement to begin. Bosnia and Herzegovina has come a long way since the 1995 Dayton Agreement. It is our hope that it will stay on course during the negotiations for membership in the European Union and the Euro-Atlantic structures.

In the meantime, however, it is necessary that efforts be redoubled to capture the two most wanted war-crime indictees — Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic — and to hand them over to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague to face charges.

We welcome the commitment expressed by all the political leaders to bring constitutional changes aimed at streamlining the three-member presidency and Parliament in preparation for elections later this year. We urge the parliament to examine the plan when it comes before it.

We also welcome the pledge made by the Prime Minister to introduce economic and social reforms, fight corruption and move the country closer towards European integration.

Lastly, we commend the European Union Force and the European Union for their efforts and commitment to assist the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to overcome years of conflict in their country. We support the efforts of the High Representative to facilitate full ownership of political responsibilities by the Government and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is critical for the sustainable political and economic stability of the country.

Mr. Al-Qahtani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to welcome Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank them for their briefings on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

That wounded country left behind the scourge of war a decade ago, and has now gotten back on its feet. There have recently been positive developments in the country, most notably the transfer to the State of all defence responsibilities, the reform of the intelligence services, the formation of the Directorate Police Restructuring Implementation and the establishment of the rule of law. That has led to the conclusion of the work of the Anti-Crime and Corruption Unit of the Office of the High Representative, which was set up to guarantee the rule of law.

Turning to the political sphere, we have been encouraged by the agreement reached between eight political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina with regard to enacting constitutional changes this year, including their agreement in principle on measures pertaining to human rights and reducing the authority of the presidency. However, political actors should continue to implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the results of the 1995 London Peace Implementation Conference and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. They must also cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and apprehend indictees at large. Unresolved border issues must also be addressed, as must the situation in Kosovo and relations with Serbia and Montenegro with regard to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A current issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina pertains to non-serving police officers who were decertified by the International Police Task Force (IPTF), including some who have been brought to justice. Given that the measures taken by the IPTF did not provide an independent and neutral manner to address the issue of the rights of decertified officers, as well as the fact that there is currently no way to appeal the decisions taken by the IPTF, the situation of those officers has become extremely difficult. A possible solution would be for the United Nations to establish a new mechanism to review these cases. We look forward to further discussions on this outstanding matter.

Once again, we hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will one day live in peace, security and stability, so that it may attain prosperity for its people.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing, and to congratulate him on his assumption of that important post. I would also like to express my appreciation to him for his efforts to promote the political process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also wish to thank Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his statement.

We are pleased to note that, in the 10 years or so since the signing of the Dayton Accords, through the efforts of all parties in the country and with the assistance of the international community, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken positive steps to build the capacity of its institutions, relaunch economic development, improve the judicial system, speed up the reform of the police and promote ethnic integration. Positive efforts have been made and clear results have been achieved.

The country has also begun the process of joining the European Union (EU). Since taking up responsibility for security, the EU military mission (EUFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina has contributed to the country's political progress. China would like to express its acknowledgement of that achievement.

All parties should today doubly cherish the hard-won results that have been achieved in the context of the country's political process. We look forward to the parties concerned in Bosnia and Herzegovina further strengthening mutual trust and unity in order to achieve harmony among ethnic communities, including their common development.

Along with the rest of the international community, China would like to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in the areas of economic development and long-term stability. We shall make our own efforts in that regard.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I now call on the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the other countries aligning themselves with this statement.

Let me start by thanking Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, High Representative and European Union Special Representative, for his very informative

briefing on developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We would also like to warmly welcome the participation of Mr. Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Union commends the High Representative for his contribution to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We particularly welcome and support his approach of promoting ownership by strengthening State institutions, reviving the economy and implementing the rule of law.

On 11 March, Foreign Ministers of the European Union and the Western Balkans reaffirmed their full support for the agenda set out at the 2003 Thessaloniki summit, as well as for the Stabilisation and Association Process, which will remain the framework for the European Union perspective on the Western Balkans. The EU confirmed that the future of the Western Balkans lies in the European Union. In practical terms, the European Union supports that perspective through its various instruments of financial and technical assistance by the European Commission, the Common Foreign and Security and Common Security and Defence Policies and the traditional bilateral support of the Union's 25 member States.

The European Union has been strongly involved in supporting, inter alia, the justice, security and defence sectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that respect, the European Union military mission (EUFOR), working in close cooperation with NATO, has assumed the main peace-stabilization role under the Dayton Peace Agreement. It has proven to be an important factor in maintaining security and stability on the ground. The Liaison and Observation Teams have also become valuable elements in the confidence-building process.

Similarly, the European Union Police Mission (EUPM) has provided useful advice and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's own efforts in bringing its police structures fully in line with European standards. The international community's continued support is needed in order to implement police restructuring, which is a key reform issue for Bosnia and Herzegovina and a requirement for further EU integration.

Finally, the European Union continues to provide significant financial support to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2000, a total of more than €500 million has been allocated to Bosnia and Herzegovina and, under the Community Assistance to Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization (CARDS) programme, some €50 million will be committed in 2006.

The European Union welcomes the political agreement reached on 18 March on constitutional reform. The agreement constitutes a significant step forward towards making Bosnia and Herzegovina's State institutions more functional and efficient. We urge Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure that the necessary legislative steps are taken in order to implement the constitutional amendments in time for the October 2006 elections. The process of constitutional reform must also continue after the elections to resolve outstanding issues and to make Bosnia and Herzegovina a fully self-sustainable, efficient and multinational State that serves its citizens.

The European Council also welcomes the progress made on the negotiations for a stabilization and association agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina since the opening of negotiations in November 2005. We encourage the relevant authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue to make swift progress in those negotiations and to implement the necessary reforms. The conclusion of the negotiations will establish a comprehensive formal contractual relationship between the European Union and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, this will mark another important step on the path to membership of the European Union.

In this context, let me recall that the pace and the conclusion of negotiations will depend in particular on Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in developing its legislative framework and administrative capacity, in implementing police reform in compliance with the agreement on police restructuring of October 2005, in adopting and implementing all necessary public broadcasting legislation and in achieving full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Full cooperation with the ICTY is essential if lasting reconciliation in the region is to be achieved. The EU Council of Ministers has therefore repeatedly urged both Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina to take decisive and immediate action to ensure that all remaining fugitive indictees, including, in particular, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, are finally brought to justice without delay.

In the past, the High Representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina have used their powers effectively to defend the spirit of the Dayton Peace Agreement, to overcome political blockages, to tackle the support network for persons indicted for war crimes and to boost the reform process. Whereas the authority of the High Representative remains an important factor in the support for meeting these objectives, the European Union fully agrees with the High Representative that, 10 years after the conflict, it is now time for Bosnia and Herzegovina to take a greater degree of ownership in these processes and to stand on its own two feet. The European Union therefore welcomes the intention of the High Representative to restrict the use of the Bonn powers, to the extent possible, to the areas of ICTY cooperation and Dayton stability.

With regard to the issue of police certification, the European Union notes that on 15 March 2006, the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board, meeting at the Political Directors' level, expressed its support for a limited role for the Office of the High Representative if the United Nations were ready to take the lead in resolving the situation. In this context, the European Union notes that the EUPM does not have an executive mandate, but it has agreed that the EUPM should stand ready to provide limited logistical support to the United Nations in addressing the outstanding issues of police certification, within the existing budget and without prejudice to the implementation of its mandate.

Bosnia and Herzegovina still has much work to do in implementing the reforms and meeting the European Union integration benchmarks. It will require continued determination and resolve on the part of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet those challenges and to continue the reform processes.

As a potential candidate of the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoys a privileged relationship with the Union. We have been standing steadfastly at the side of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina throughout the past 10 years by providing significant financial, military and human resources. We will also continue our support to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. İlkin (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to welcome the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Adnan Terzic.

I would also like to thank Mr. Schwarz-Schilling, the High Representative and European Union (EU) Special Representative, for his briefing today and to commend him and his colleagues for their tireless efforts.

Turkey has already aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union. Therefore, I shall confine myself to making brief comments on a number of points.

Turkey has close historical, cultural and human bonds with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and our political relations have always been inspired and strengthened by those ties. From the first day of the civil war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey has been actively involved in the efforts to defuse the crisis and has been contributing to the efforts to establish peace, stability and prosperity in that country. Within that framework and in that spirit, Turkey contributes to both the European Union force — operation Althea — and the European Union Police Mission.

We welcome the considerable progress Bosnia and Herzegovina has made in recent years with regard to reforms in the fields of taxation, customs, intelligence, security, defence and the judiciary. Turkey will continue to support those reforms, aiming at ensuring an efficient State structure in Bosnia and Herzegovina that will eventually bring the country closer to the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

Turkey attaches great importance to the harmonious coexistence of different cultures, religions and ethnic identities. The desire and success of the three peoples who founded the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina to live together in a multi-ethnic and multicultural society will not only contribute to national and regional stability, but will also set a shining example for other countries and communities facing similar experiences.

Turkey, as an active member of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, will continue to closely follow the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Mr. Schwarz-Schilling to respond to the comments raised.

Mr. Schwarz-Schilling: First, I want to express my thanks for the broad support I heard today for our work and for the partnership together with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic. I will also say that I think that this partnership is the key to this year's progress; I hope that we will make every effort to reach the goals mentioned at today's meeting.

I think there was broad consensus on the goals and the priorities. But there were some questions about possible ways of settling the question of decertified police officers. Perhaps I will just make a brief comment about that. I believe that, on this matter, it is necessary to address it as part of the international community's phasing-out plan. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina is under tremendous pressure — by decertified officers, as well as by the media and human rights organizations — to act decisively on this matter. Thus, I too joined in that effort in my 10 February 2006 letter to the Security Council.

I understand that of late there have been discussions on this subject in the Security Council drafting group. I would like to inform the Council that the matter has received significant attention both in the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) and in the European Union's Political and Security Council. Those two bodies have stated their readiness to assist the United Nations if the Organization were ready to take the lead in resolving this matter. I believe that the certification of police officers by the International Police Task Force was an ambitious and largely successful attempt to rehabilitate the ranks of police officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many of those officers had been compromised by involvement in criminal activities during and after the war. When the process was concluded, at the end of 2002, no provision was made for reviewing decisions where credible evidence existed that the right procedures were not followed. I am concerned that the absence of measures to address those cases could strengthen the case of those claiming that the United Nations-led process was altogether flawed. A review mechanism would consolidate the certification process by overturning confirming decisions that currently raise questions about the process as a whole.

Members have probably seen the report prepared by the European Commission for Democracy through Law — the Venice Commission — of the Council of Europe. Although I acknowledge that the report is not legally binding, I believe it nevertheless provides a good basis for discussion. The proposal confines the scope of the review to the cases of those who have challenged their dismissal before a court. That is in line with the idea that the exercise would be meant to strengthen the United Nations process rather than undermining it. As members know, I have been invited by the PIC, along with the European Union (EU) Council secretariat, to follow up with the United Nations the line suggested in the non-paper presented by the EU Council secretariat. European Union member States that are also members of the Security Council have lent their support to that dialogue — of course, without prejudice to their responsibilities under the provisions of the United Nations Charter. The Office of the High Representative will, of course, do its best to send help to New York to go into the details of these cases.

Thus, I think that we should really bring this to a final conclusion, in good faith and in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, so that no bad impression attaches to the legal system of the young State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I therefore fully support this process.

I thank participants very much for all their comments. I will study them carefully. At this crucial time, I hope that Council members will continue to support me in the future, and I thank them for the opportunity to participate in today's meeting.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Schwarz-Schilling for his clarifications.

There are no further speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11:45 a.m.